AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-70 (Cancelled).

71. (Previously Presented) An encoding apparatus comprising:

means for creating N streams (where, N is a positive integer equal to or greater than 2) of encoded data from one received content; and

means for consolidating the N streams of encoded data into at least one file as a single stream of encoded data, the encoding of the content being done in such a way that the encoded data can be decoded even if the same part of the content is exchanged among the N streams of encoded data on a per-encoding basis.

72. (Cancelled).

73. (Previously Presented) An encoding apparatus comprising:

means for creating N streams (where, N is a positive integer equal to or greater than 2) of encoded data from one received content;

means for merging the N streams of encoded data on a frame basis with the N streams of encoded data shifted by M frames with each other, and also shifted in time by M frames with each other when distributed; and

means for storing the N merged streams of encoded data into at least one file as a single track.

74. (Cancelled).

75. (Currently Amended) An encoding apparatus comprising:

means for creating N streams (where, N is a positive integer equal to or greater than 2) of encoded data, each of ~~which has a~~ the N streams of encoded data having a different compression rate, from one received content;

means for merging the N streams of encoded data on a frame basis with the N streams of encoded data shifted by M frames with each other, and also shifted in time by M frames with each other when distributed ; and

means for storing the N merged streams of encoded data into at least one file as a single track.

76. (Currently Amended) An encoding apparatus comprising:

means for creating N streams (where, N is a positive integer equal to or greater than 2) of encoded data, each of ~~which has a~~ the N streams of encoded data having a different compression rate, from one received content;

means for encoding the content in such a way that the encoded data can be decoded even if the same part of the content is exchanged among the N streams of encoded data on a per-encoding basis;

means for merging the N streams of encoded data on a frame basis with the N streams of encoded data shifted with each other by a predetermined length of time; and

means for storing the N merged streams of encoded data into at least one file as a single track.

77. (Previously Presented) The encoding apparatus as defined in claims 71, further comprising means for adding an identifier of a same number to encoding units of a same part of the N streams of encoded data as a header.

Claims 78-80 (Cancelled).